

## New Disclosures —

# THE STORY OF AMERICANS AT THE BAY OF PIGS

The lid of official secrecy on the 1961 Cuban invasion has slipped again. After two years, a fairly complete picture of American fliers involved can be put together now. It shows how they were recruited, and their mission—in which four died.

More details on the role of American airmen in the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba were put on the official record in Congress during the closing days of February.

As a result, facts long hidden behind doors of official secrecy by the Kennedy Administration began coming to light. This now can be told:

- At least 18 American airmen—pilots, navigators, radio operators and flight engineers—were recruited for combat duty with the Cuban invasion force.

- Four of these airmen were killed in combat at the Bay of Pigs—a fact reported by "U. S. News & World Report" in January and now officially confirmed for the first time.

- Widows of the four men now are receiving substantial monthly payments from a trust fund set up for them in a New York bank. These payments are to continue for life, or until remarriage. In event of remarriage, their children, of whom there are five, will receive payments monthly until they come of age.

- Unofficially, the families have been told the men are dead. Some insurance policies have been paid; none are being challenged for proof of death. But all the U. S. has said so far, in a State Department letter of Feb. 2, 1963, is that the men were on a nonscheduled cargo plane that went down in the Caribbean on or about April 19, 1961.

- The airmen, all civilians, were recruited secretly in January 1961, by men

who said they represented an anti-Communist Cuban group.

All these details began to unfold on February 25, when Senator Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois, the Senate Republican Leader, said he had learned that four American airmen died in combat at the Bay of Pigs.

Before the day was out, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, of Montana, confirmed this. He said he was one of a few Congressmen told about the deaths at the time, in a secret briefing by the Kennedy Administration. He said he felt free now to break his silence because of the statement by Senator Dirksen, who was not at the briefing.

As the Dirksen and Mansfield leads

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Below are 3 of 4 American airmen now confirmed to have been killed in the Bay of Pigs invasion. All were married; three had children. Their widows receive payments from a trust fund in a New York bank.

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—Wide World Photos